

TERRORIST STEREOTYPE TOWARD MUSLIMS
(Semiotic Analysis on the Terrorists Stereotype toward Muslims
in the Film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika*)



Arranged as one of the conditions for completing the Strata I Study Program at
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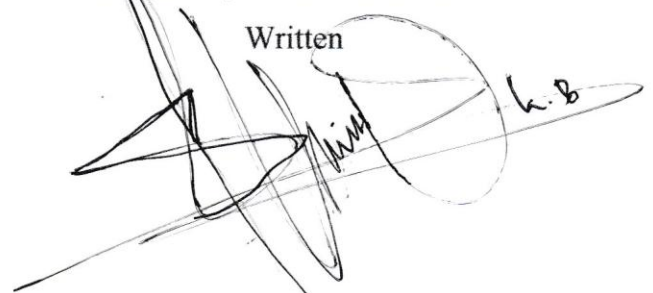
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TERRORIST STEREOTYPE TOWARD MUSLIMS
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Abstracts

Terrorism is an act that causes fear or horror in the community. Terrorists that often occur with certain religions. Stereotypes arise about a particular religion. The emergence of terrorist stereotypes in western society towards Islam is built through messages carried by the mass media. Film is one of the mass media used in the practice of mass communication. As a function of a mass media, films also convey messages from communicators to communicants. And the film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika* illustrates the terrorist stereotypes toward muslims. This study uses qualitative research, with semiotic methods. The author conducted an analysis using the signs contained in the film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika*, with the analysis of Roland Barthes semiotics. The results of this study indicate that there are some signs that illustrate the existence of terrorist stereotypes towards Muslims. Where Muslims are labeled or judged as dangerous groups and must be watched. The film also shows that Muslims are considered criminals. That is what raises the negative stereotype that Islam is a hard religion that only commits violence and bombings everywhere. But all that is explained in the film that all stereotypes are not facts, but only the prejudices and prejudices of the people that are only seen from one side of the facts that are displayed or seen regardless of other facts.

Keywords: Stereotype, Semiotic, Terrorism

Abstrak

Terorisme adalah perbuatan yang menimbulkan ketakutan atau kengerian pada masyarakat. Teroris yang terjadi sering dikaitkan dengan agama tertentu sehingga muncul stereotype mengenai sebuah agama tertentu. Munculnya stereotype teroris di masyarakat barat terhadap agama Islam ini dibangun melalui pesan-pesan yang dibawa oleh media massa. Film adalah salah satu media massa yang digunakan dalam praktek komunikasi massa. Sebagaimana fungsi dari sebuah media massa, film juga menyampaikan pesan dari komunikator kepada komunikan. Dan film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika* ini menggambarkan mengenai stereotype teroris terhadap muslim. Penelitian ini menggunakan penelitian kualitatif, dengan metode semiotika. Penulis melakukan analisis dengan menggunakan tanda-tanda yang terdapat di dalam film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika*, dengan analisis semiotika Roland Barthes. Hasil dari penelitian ini menunjukkan ditemukan beberapa tanda-tanda yang menggambarkan adanya stereotype teroris terhadap muslim. Dimana para Muslim diberi label atau di judge sebagai kelompok yang berbahaya dan wajib diwaspadai. Pada film tersebut juga terlihat bahwa Muslim dianggap sebagai kriminal. Hal itulah yang memunculkan stereotype negative bahwa Islam adalah agama yang keras yang hanya melakukan kekerasan dan

pengeboman diman-mana. Namun semua itu yang dijelaskan pada film bahwa semua stereotype bukanlah fakta, melainkan hanyalah prasangka dan praduga masyarakat yang hanya terlihat dari satu sisi fakta yang ditampilkan atau terlihat tanpa memperdulikan fakta-fakta lain.

Kata Kunci: Stereotype, Semiotika, Terorisme

1. INTRODUCTION

Film is a masterpiece of invention in human history. Film is also one of the most attractive media in various community including children and adult because film entertains and joy in spare time following their busy of such working. Even, film may change human mindset realizing in their daily life (Rumondor & Henny, 2004). Film is defined as a cultural art work, which is a social order and mass communication media created based on cinematography rule with or without sound and it can be shown. Thus, film can be stated as a form of cultural art work as well as mass communication media showing message for public (Arifin, 2011).

Film is mass media accepted by public as a means for delivering positive and negative messages for the viewer. It is even, used as means of provocation, which causes such a conflict. In the current development of mass communication media, film becomes the most significant media in learning system. The power and strength of film may reach social segments, impacting experts think that film has potentials to influence public (Sobur, 2009). Film as mass media is part of response to a spare time, holiday, leisure time, and way to spend time with family in leisure time. Film is also a media reaching so many population including village (McQuail, 2011). In other word, film can be the most enjoying media of the community. There are plenty of film with amazing variety of genre created each year by famous productions around the world.

Scenes displayed in a film definitely contains certain sign representing such a message delivered to its viewer. Viewer, therefore, must be critical to the film they watch, whether it delivers witness and learning for its viewer or

becomes means of sending politic interest and spreading such ideology (Abror, 2013).

2. METHOD

The writer studies signs and picture visualization lies in film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika* building stereotype about Islam, which is identic with violence and terrorism. The study uses qualitative approach. (Bogdan, 1975) states that qualitative is a research procedure resulting descriptive data (data collected in form of picture and words not numeric).

Object of the study is a movie entitled “*Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika*” focusing on sign and symbol representing terrorism stereotype in western society toward Islam.

The data are analyzed using semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes. In analyzing a sign or symbol, Barthes used denotation, connotation, and myth. Myth is built by a range of meaning existed before. In other word, myth is second order of meaning system (Sobur, 2004).

Steps of semiotic model of Roland Barthes to analyze meaning is mapped as follow:

Table 1. Steps in Semiotic Model of Roland Barthes

1. Signifier	2. Signified	
3. Denotative Sign		
3. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIER		4. CONNOTATIVE SIGNIFIED
5. CONNOTATIVE SIGN		

Of the Barthes map, it seems that denotative sign (3) consists of signifier (1) and signified (2). However, at the same time, denotative sign is a connotative signifier (4) (Sobur, 2004). Of the connotative signifier, it emerges connotative signified as base of connotative sign.

Technique of collecting data in the study are document and reference by collecting data from mass media and brows data from personal file and reference textbooks.

The data validity uses theory triangulation by collecting data and theory from theme integrated to achieve comprehensive result (Krisyantono, 2010). The use of theory triangulation due to the focus of the study is based on the semiotic analysis to signify the sign relating to terrorism stereotype in western society toward Islam. The data triangulation is done using more than one perception of data in discussing the problem analyzed in myth like document, archives, textbook, and related articles. The steps done by writer are drawing myth in scenes studied, recheck the data by consulting them to the textbook,, literature or mass.

3. RESULT

Film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika* is produced in setting of social life in America, where most of the citizens are non Moslem, containing many stereotypes about terrorism toward Islam.


Film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika* consists of several scenes, but writer limits only five scenes to analyze, which have terrorism Stereotype meaning toward Islam by western society.

The writer analyzes the terrorist stereotype toward Muslims viewed from each scene using semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes, focusing on two-step significance on the theory, those are denotative and connotative.

The following are several scenes showing western society mind about terrorism toward Islam.

3.1 Analysis on the Terrorists Stereotype toward Muslims in the Film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika*

Table 2. Visitor Suspecting Hanum

Visual	Dialog	Type Of Shoot
	<p>Visitor: "You Shouldn't be here!"</p> <p>Hanum: I'm not comfortable seen by people</p> <p>Rangga: Go ahead</p>	<p>Medium Close Up: object is seen from chest to head.</p>


Denotative meaning of the scene is when woman visitor in WTC was mad to Hanum, although her statements were not clear enough, but her lips movement and her finger appointing to Hanum show what she said. Then, hanum began to be anxious and gone.

The connotation meaning in the scene displayed in medium close up aimed to explain the woman's expression suspecting Hanum. It was explained that the woman was very disappointed to Hanum and Islam, accusing Hanum's faith teaching violence and murder. It made Hanum guessting of what make the woman be mad her.

The purpose of the scene is the prohibition to accuse someone with accusation like adultery, stealing, killing, deviation, disintegrate and other without proofs to be shown. Suspecting without proof, witness and signs are forbidden. Al-Qur'an states that 'Hi people who believe, avoid most pre-thought (suspicion), because most of the prejudice is a sin. And not looking bad people and do not gossip, right one another. Would one of you like to eat the flesh of his dead brother? Then you would feel disgusted

him. And fear Allah. Indeed, Allah is acceptor of repentance, the most Merciful' (QS. Al-Hujurat [49]: 12).

Table 3. Billy Was Abusing Hanum

Visual	Dialog	Type Of Shoot
	<p>Billy: is this what the Qur'an teaches? Tell me Hanum. If Al-Qur'an teaches to kill people different from you? Are you taught to kill my son and the thousands of people in tragedy?</p>	<p>Medium Close Up: here the object is shown from the chest up to the head.</p>


Denotation meaning of the scene is that Billy abused Hanum, a veiled-Moslem. Billy regarded that Islam is terrorist since the incidence of WTC bomb killing his wife and children so that when Hanum asked Azima's address to Billy, he was impolite to her and being mad screaming that Hanum's religion was terrorist. Hanum was confused of Billy's behavior.

The connotation meaning of the scene is taken by Medium Close Up. The connotation meaning is seen that Billy was being mad to Hanum with crazy face and big eyes. It showed that Billy did not like Hanum because she was Moslem and wearing veil. Hanum's face in the scene was silent when Billy abused her showing that Hanum tried to be patient of Billy's behavior and did not respond it.

The myth seen in the scene is that several people, in western which Islam is not the majority, veil is regarded as symbol of violence and

separation. Similarly, Islam is regarded as religion supporting violence terrorism then veiled woman becomes victim of discrimination.

Table 4. Billy Returned Cake given by Azima and Sarah


Visual	Dialog	Type Of Shoot
	<p>Billy: This cake will not restore my family. This cake means nothing to me.</p> <p>Don't beg from me again.</p>	<p>Medium Close Up: here the object is shown from the chest up to the head.</p>

The denotation meaning seen in the scene is that Billy returned cake given by Sarah. At that time, Billy stated that the cake would not return his family died in WTC incidence and the cake was not valuable for him.

The connotation meaning of the scene is that Billy returned the cake given and made by Sarah. The picture was taken by Medium Close Up. The connotation meaning shows that Billy in his crazy face returned the cake because it did not return his family who died in WTC incidence believed by western society that the incidence was done by Moslem, Azima and Sarah were Moslem. Azima and Sarah were so disappointed because Billy did not receive the cake she gave.

The myth seen in the scene that modern country like United States is popular with individualist and capitalist citizen. They focus on their own interest and do not care to others. Individualism means selfish. People do not help or cooperate to other in family atmosphere.

Table 5. Young Man Disturbing Hanum

Visual	Dialog	Type Of Shoot
	<p>Youth: Hey, towel head. Aren't you supposed to bomb anything?</p>	<p>Medium shoot: the object is shown from above the waist to above the head</p>


Denotation meaning on the scene was that hanum was disturbed by several young men gathering on the side of the road. They abused Hanum as thorn head. They laughed Hanum. Hanum just kept silent of their behavior. Hanum was helped by a religious sister so the young men run and left them both.

The connotation meaning on the scene taken by medium shoot is that Hanum was in the road side and disturbed by seeral young men. Hanum was confused showing that she was not comfortable with the situation. The scene showed that the young men abused her and said that she had thorn head. It reflected that they did not like Islam and the religious lesson because they regarded that Islam was terrorist. Hanum kept silent and was not influenced by the men disturbing her.

Myth of the scene showed that fanaticism and tolerance are two great enemy. They could not be integrated and always quarreled. Fanaticism means feeling of true and cannot accept difference. Tolerance is

accommodative for every difference. Fanatism is regarded as bad attitude, while tolerance is ideal in the moddle of human life. It is not true that fanatism and tolerance are enemy but they run together.

Table 6. Michael Jones Was Explaining to Hanum

Visual	Dialog	Type Of Shoot
	<p>Michael Jones: Muslims spread killing and destruction all over the world! They make my life pointless. They took my wife, Anna!</p>	<p>Medium Close Up: here the object is shown from the chest up to the head.</p>


Denotation meaning of the scene was Michael Jones returned documents and explained to Hanum that Moslem was murderer and destroyed world. Michael Jones said that his life was useless because the WTC incidence killed his wife.

Connotation meaning of the scene showed that Michael Jones was in Ground zero demonstration. The picture was taken by Medium Close Up. Connotation meaning showed that Michael Jones said something to Hanum with his crazy face, he hated and did not like Moslem because Moslem caused murder and destroy in WTC incidence causing his wife died.

Myth seen on the scene was that never let hatred toward other religion and be fair for them. It closes to goodness. Al-Qur'an states that 'People who believe you must be the people who always uphold the (truth) because Allah, being a witness to the fair. And let not your hatred towards

people, encourage you to apply unfair. To be fair, because fair it is nearer to piety. And fear Allah; indeed, Allah is knowing of what you do' (Q.S Al-Ma'idah: 8).

Table 7. Ibrahim Hussein Moderate Telephone Friend.

Visual	Dialog	Type Of Shoot
	Ibrahim Hussein: The package is already with me	Medium Close Up: here the object is shown from the chest up to the head.

Denotation's meaning in this scene Ibrahim Hussein was telephoned with his friend and explained that the package to be sent was already on Ibrahim Hussein and would be sent soon. And hope to God good luck.

The meaning of connotation in this scene Ibrahim Hussein is telephoning his friend behind the house. The image is taken with Medium Close Up. The meaning of the connotation shows that Ibrahim Hussein was explaining on the telephone to his friend with a serious face and in a whisper so as not to be heard by others and the secret package could be successfully sent.

The meaning of the myth that is seen in this scene is about the stereotype of someone who is not necessarily true. As in the stereotype theory of Soekanto, (1993), which states that stereotypes can simply be

understood as a combination of characteristics that are most often applied by a group to another group, or by someone to someone else.

Stereotypes often associated with religion include labeling Islam as a religion of terror. Pope Benedict XVI for example once said that the meaning of jihad in Islam and the spread of Islam with swords. While a number of Islamic leaders strongly criticized and considered it to be anti-Islamic. Although there has been clarification from the Vatican, the anger of Muslims continues. In fact, the supreme leader of the Catholic Church only quoted the statement of a 14th century Orthodox Christian emperor, Emperor Manuel II Palaeologus (Muffid, 2012: 280).

3.2 Categorization on the Terrorists Stereotype toward Muslims In Film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika*

3.2.1 Veil

In the Scene above Islam is still symbolically understood, through clothes worn, thus giving birth to some myths that women who wear hijab or who wear headscarves are a symbol of Muslim women in the world.

The veil serves as a language that conveys social and cultural messages. The tradition of veiling at the beginning of its appearance is actually an affirmation and formation of one's diversity identity. In its development, the meaning of the veil has a significant shift in meaning. Hijab does not only function as a religious identity, but also enters the social, cultural, political, economic and fashion domains (Amadi, Yohana & Nova, 2007).

In this scene, for some people, especially in western countries where the majority are non-Muslim, the hijab is considered a symbol of oppression and separation. Likewise the notion that Islam is a religion that is often associated with acts of violence and terrorism, so it is not uncommon for women wearing hijab to become victims of discrimination. Scene when Hanum and Rangga visit Ground Zero and

get discrimination from one of the visitors. In this scene the background of the place taken is Ground Zero, which is the former ruins of the World Trade Center building, also known as the monument of sadness, which when the anniversary of the collapse of the building people will gather and pray for the victims. When a Muslim visits Ground Zero by wearing a Muslim-like clothing that is wearing a hijab, this will cause a reaction from visitors who believe that Muslims are terrorists in the WTC.

Also in the scene discrimination on Hanum wearing a hijab that hanum was being disturbed by several young Americans who were gathering on the roadside. The youth insulted Hanum as a towel head and taunted Hanum and laughed at Hanum, which showed that they did not like Islam and the teachings of the religion because they considered Islam a terrorist who believed that Muslims were terrorists in the WTC.

From the results of the analysis above, it can be concluded that the headscarf is often interpreted as a symbol of oppression and separation. Likewise, the notion that Islam is a religion that is often associated with violence and terrorism, so it is not uncommon for hijab women to become victims of discrimination after the collapse of the WTC building which is believed to be the culprit.

3.2.2 Beard

The stereotype of Islam as a terrorist religion is also shown from a beard. Beard has become a common thing for westerners. The beard attribute after the September 11, 2001 attacks by Al Qaeda organizations became a kind of reinforcement that bearded Muslims had a bit of radical thinking.

The depiction of a bearded man is seen on the Ibrahim Hussein Scene carrying a package. The scene illustrates that bearded Muslim men have radical and slightly conservative thoughts. Which confirms that a Muslim is considered the person who carried out the bombing.

Physical conditions often become a generalization of a person to a particular group and grouping as the same type. This arises because the person is in the same environment or he has similarities that can be seen by the five senses (Heider in Sarwono & Meinarno, 2009: 32).

Beard is an attribute that is closely related to Islam and acts of terrorism that describe the acts of terrorism that occurred on September 11, 2001. In the act of terror that attacked the WTC was claimed to be carried out by Osama Bin Laden's group namely Al Qaeda. Where in the media describes the figure of Osama Bin Ladden who has a beard as an Al Qaeda leader who claims responsibility for the act of terror.

Beard is actually not only an attribute inherent in Muslims as well as Christians and other religions. But the beard is often associated with Muslims and Muslims are associated with acts of terrorism (Mu'ti, 2009: 101). In Islam, maintaining Beard is an option because in Islam it is not obligatory to maintain it and is only recommended according to the Sunnah of the Prophet.

3.2.3 Peci

In the Film Bulan Terbelah in Heaven of America, on the scene above Ibrahim Hussein also uses peci attributes that describe the identity of terrorist stereotypes. The cap is a head covering and functions like a hat. Peci has been known in several countries especially in Islamic countries, countries in Southeast Asia, the Arabian peninsula, Africa and countries in Europe and almost all over the world.

In the Scene above the peci attribute becomes a kind of thing that has something to do with a Muslim in general. This attribute is seen so that westerners consider peci a trigger for negative perceptions of Muslims in general.

In Islam, the use of peci is not required. Islam considers the peci to be a symbol of a courtesy to God. The connection of Islam to the peci appears because many Muslims who, when carrying out religious

activities wear this peci, so that ultimately labeling the peci itself becomes a labeling attribute for Muslims in general.

After the incident at WTC America which was suspected of terrorism, negative perceptions of the attributes inherent in a Muslim emerged. This was motivated by the perpetrators of the bombing claiming Al Qaeda and in the name of Islam in carrying out the action so that there was a fear of Westerners towards Muslims who wear attributes that show that he is Muslim.

After the terrorist act it also affected a number of Muslims in western communities who caused police supervision by the police to be very strict. Very strict supervision of Islamic societies has an impact on generalization of Muslims in general which makes Muslim relations with western communities increasingly distant.

So in the Film *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika*, it tries to reject stereotypes that have been developing in the minds of the public, especially Western society. The scene of the film cut above seeks to restore the Islamic image that had been damaged by misconceptions about Islam, namely by instilling the idea that Muslims are not what they think, which is often considered by the West as a people who are identical with violence, damage and war. In the scene above, it can be seen how Muslims are people who have high solidarity and care for others. This shows that Muslims are also taught about good values for the welfare of the surrounding community.

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the result of the semiotic analysis of Roland Barthes on *Bulan Terbelah Di Langit Amerika* film, it founds several signs describing terrorist stereotype toward Muslims. Moslems are labelled or judged as dangerous and suspicious group. The film also showed that Moslems are regarded as crime.

Terrorist Stereotype toward Muslims found in the study is negative stereotype toward Islam. Western society cannot accept the Moslem attendance in

the world, particularly in United States, who always campaign radical and religious issue after the incidence of bomb (WTC), due to discrimination and attacks toward Muslims in US. In the film, it is illustrated that US society blames Moslem on the incidence of 9/11 (WTC). Then, western society began to keep apart and hate Islam. It emerges negative stereotype that Islam is radical religion performing violence and bomb. It is explained in the film that the stereotypes are not facts, unless the society suspicion and assumption of a facts displayed or seen without comparing to other facts.

The weakness of this study is that researcher have not explained the whole of terrorist stereotype toward Muslims. In this study the researcher only explained from the point of view, mindset, negative prejudice in western society towards Islam as a terrorist religion. The researcher should explain in its entirety starting from the attributes, appearance, manner of dress used as the stereotype of Islam as a terrorist religion, side of view, mindset, prejudice, and also its effects such as prejudice and discrimination on an issue.

Through this research, the researcher advises other researchers, especially those who will examine *Terrorist Stereotypes toward Muslims* in different films, should discuss further about *Stereotype* to their effects such as prejudice and discrimination on a deeper issue.

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